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ABSTRACT

An experimental program financed by the Commission of the European Communities in two primary schools in Cassis, France, an area with a stable Portuguese immigrant population, involved intercultural education and the use of a Portuguese mother tongue teacher who served not only as a classroom teacher but also as a school-community liaison. The experiment operated on three levels. On the linguistic level, students discussed subjects from their intercultural classes to show that Portuguese could be used for subjects taught in the French educational system. On the intercultural level, the most important of the three, the mother tongue teacher evoked the students' country of origin through dialogue and through curricular activities relating to the local environment. On the social level, the most interesting of the three, the mother tongue teacher became a community focal point, serving as a social worker and school liaison for the Portuguese community. The experiment successfully created an appreciation of: the need for teachers to work as a group to develop teaching activities, the concept of cultural "discovery," the importance of school-community liaison and of opening the school to the community, and the pupil as focus of classroom communication. However, it did not completely solve the problem of Portuguese student underachievement. (SB)

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The CDCC's Project No. 7 :

"The education and cultural development of migrants"

CASE STUDY
ON
PORTUGUESE CULTURE IN CASSIS
(FRANCE)

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STRASBOURG
1983

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Strasbourg, 15 February 1983 DECS/EGT (83) 2

THE CDCC'S PROJECT NO. 7

"THE EDUCATION AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF MIGRANTS"

CASE STUDY

PORTUGUESE CULTURE IN CASSIS

by

Prof. Ezio COMPAGNONI

The views expressed in this publication are those of the author; they do not necessarily reflect those of the Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe or its Secretariat

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INTRODUCTION

This study analyses the problem of cultural contact between a large and firmly-established community of Portuguese migrants and the local community in a small town in the South of France.

For a number of socio-economic and socio-cultural reasons, rapid integration seems assured.

An intercultural experiment carried out in the town's primary schools, where the most acute problems in the relations between school and migrant children have been identified is analysed at some length.

These relations are considered fundamental to the cultural development of migrants because they affect the family's most significant asset, ie the children's future, and because they determine the ability of foreign cultures without any local traditions to integrate with the official school and with that of the community at large.

THE OVERALL CONTEXT OF THE EXPERIMENT

1.0. Population

Cassis, a residential suburb of Marseille, is a seaside resort which derives its livelihood from the summer tourist trade. Its resident population is 6,8000, but at weekends, in holiday periods and during the summer months this figure can easily be multiplied by 2 or 3. Most of the town's resident population work in the tertiary sector (shops and services), hold managerial posts (in industry, commerce and higher education) or are professional people.

The fishing industry is on the decline because of the hardships involved and the meagre profits to be made. It may therefore be said that the town's economic development is based on tourist trade, which, to judge by the inhabitants' prosperity, seems to be faring very well.

1.1. Sociological characteristics of the migrant population

Immigration is a relatively recent phenomenon in Cassis;the two largest communities are the North African,which is constantly growing, and the Portuguese, which arrived two generations ago and is tending towards numberical stability. The outstanding feature of the Portuguese immigrant community is that it constitutes a social reality which has constructed its migratory history within the French culture of Cassis; the situation is one of uninterrupted socio-cultural contact combined with steadily rising socio-economic status. For a clearer understanding of the community's characteristics it is useful to remember that the migratory mechanism involved here is that of the "chain" of family and friends. When people come from the same region and from similar social backgrounds, there is cultural homogeneity (frequent communication and open cultural relations).

The Portuguese community of Cassis knows its history and is capable of reconstructing its stages. The testimonies of members of the first families to arrive make it possible to retrace the stages of the enforced exile of 1929 and thereabouts due to the world economic crisis, and hence those of the present group's development.

The elements which have enabled the Portuguese community to preserve its own cultural identity include:

- a common migratory history;
- concentration in a small urban area;
- membership of social classes with a similar economic status;
- a family organisation based on the same principles;
- a great religiousness;
- continued use of the mother tongue in the family environment;
- close links with the home village: regular visits to Portugal for the major religious festivals (Christmas and Easter) and during the holidays.

1.2. Linguistic characteristics

From a strictly socio-linguistic point of view, the Portuguese families have largely continued to use the mother tongue for communication within the family and with compatriots; they use a practical French contaminated by interference from Protuguese (at all levels, especially the phonological) for social communication (work and relationships outside the family). There is accordingly very marked diglossia among adults, although the phenomenon is disappearing among second-generation youngsters, who are tending to break the pattern of "loyalty" to the language of the family as a result of schooling and relations with their peers.

At the same time, a crack has begun to appear in the group's internal homogeneity, especially in recent years and among recent arrivals, who tend to integrate as quickly as possible with the host society and often prefer to use French, even within the family. There are two reasons for this: either they feel they are helping the children with their education, or they hope that, through the children's education, they will be able to improve their own learning of a language which they see as a vital asset if they are to become more dynamically integrated from the soical point of view. This development represents a very important change in the phenomenon of immigration, which immigrants no longer perceive as being of a precarious and temporary nature. This new perception has been confirmed by the government policy towards immigrants, which, since 1974, has tended to raise their social status, enhance their cultural identity, assist their socio-cultural integration and improve their living conditions.

This phenomenon can be seen very clearly in Cassis in the introduction of the Portuguese language at primary school, in the EEC's pilot project setting up intercultural activities alongside the teaching of the mother tongue, and in the active contribution made to immigrants' cultural initiatives through the town's Agostini Cultural Centre.

1.3. Portuguese culture in Cassis

The Cultural Centre has made possible the organisation of a series of cultural activities which have helped not only to enhance the Portuguese group's standing in the town, but also to make it more aware of its own cultural identity. One of the most significant activities has been a "Portuguese Week" held in 1979. The events included craft exhibitions, folk dancing and singing, and showings of films and documentaries by Portuguese directors. The Centre supported the formation of a Portuguese folk singing and dancing group, the Santa Maria Ensemble, which, in the space of a few years, has become famous in the Provence-Côte d'Azur region.

Clearly, this favourable climate and the new opportunities for the Portuguese to assert their own specific character within the town's culture make them prouder to be part of Portuguese culture, and this situation in turn alters the problem of contacts with French culture.

There is no longer a tendency to want to become assimilated at all costs or to refuse to be different, but a genuine interest and desire to acquire a better knowledge of the group's cultural heritage. This results in a weakening of the defences which the group had put up when it felt threatened, leading the most enterprising members to consider the possibility of openly displaying their culture; the nationals in turn are drawn into a process of cultural exchange. Examples include the celebration of Easter according to an old Portuguese tradition (a shower of petals along the route of the procession); or the participation of the Portuguese ensemble alongside the Cassis-Calendal Provençal Folk Ensemble on Saint John's Day, a local Provençal festivity.

1.4. Cultural policy in Cassis

For some years, the local authorities have been pursuing a distinctly outward-looking cultural policy; this policy is geared to development both of the tourist trade and of the local culture, which, while preserving the national traditions is opening up to the various cultural models present in the region. Cassis is twinned with towns on the West Coast of England and in the Soviet Union, and this has provided opportunities for exchanges and visits, especially at primary-school level. There is also an all-year-round residential centre for visiting classes of French and foreign schoolchildren. This policy and the experience of contact with foreign countries certainly play a fundamental role in the positive attitude towards the immigrant communities.

In conclusion, the experiment's socio-cultural context is highly favourable to an intercultural socio-educational development; there would seem to be no problems of rejection or discrimiantion with regard to the immigrant groups. The Portuguese community, in particular, seems economically well-integrated and participates in the town's cultural activities.

1.5. The experiment's institutional framework

This case study forms part of the pilot project financed by the Commission of the European Communities and relates to the experiment carried out in the Marseille regions in the period 1979-82 to promote the teaching of mother tongues and cultures to foreign children in French primary schools.

The experiment was supervised by the Aix-en-Provence Ecole Normale Supérieure des Instituteurs (Teacher Training College), itself answerable to the Ministry of Education's Schools Directorate. Actually it was conducted by the college's CEFISEM-CEFREM unit (1), which prepared the ground and supported the teaching staff of the various schools involved in the operation.

(1) CEFISEM:
(Training and Information Centre for the Schooling of Migrant Children) a specialist section of the Aix-en-Provence Teacher Training College.
CEFREM:
(Training Centre for Rapprochement between Mediterranean People), an initiative of the Aix-Marseille Education Authority's Further training Department.

At the request of the Portuguese Consulate, the municipality of Cassis agreed, after a favourable opinion had been received from CEFISEM-CEFREM, to carry out the experiment with Portuguese in the schools "F Mistral" and "R Heriche". This was on account of the high percentage of Portuguese pupils in the town's schools: 50% of the foreign school population and 4% of the total number of pupils.

The statistics for the last two years provide the following figures:

	1981-82	1982-83	1982-83 (nursery schools)
Number enrolled			
Born in Portugal			
Born in the Federal Republic of Germany			
Born in France			

The table shows clearly that the number of Portuguese is tending to stabilise and that there is both a considerable increase in the number of children born in France and a small drop in the number of births.

2. THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE EXPERIMENT

2.0. Overall objectives

The objectives of the Cassis experiment are directly related to the policy guidelines adopted by the EEC member states with regard to the schooling of migrant children. France, in particular, has embodied these guidelines in a ciruclar (No 78 239 of 25.7.78) laying down general policy on the reception and guidance of foreign schoolchildren and the enhancement of their language and culture. This was to be done through the development of intercultural activities incorporated into the ordinary timetable.

Furthermore, it is believed that the institutionalised presence of foreign teachers can also benefit teaching in general by promoting:

- a more genuine contact with the foreign cultures present at school;
- increased co-operation between teachers with a view to resolving the problems posed by migrant children as pupils;
- a greater awareness of these problems, implying a need for critical thought about current teaching and assessment methods(1).

If these overall objectives were attained, it would be possible to establish new educational relations with young migrants and reduce the current failure rates considerably.

Consequently, the two fundamental policy objectives are:

- to transform current education, which places too much emphasis on a dominant culture that suppresses differences and local problems;

(1) Explanatory memorandum of 1.6.79, Schools Directorate, Ministry of Education.

- to put an end to the high failure rate among migrant children, which causes early social relegation and underqualification, making it difficult for them to find employment.

2.1 Specific objectives

CEFISEM-CEFREM adopted these objectives and formulated them as follows:

- to enable the educational institution to take account of the different cultures of the families whose children attend it and to disseminate them among the teachers and pupils alongside the predominant culture;

- for this purpose, to open schools to the various families and ask them to act as cultural informants for the teachers and pupils;

- to reorganise social life (adjustment of the timetable, of socio-educational activities and of courses suited to them, support for teaching staff, participation by foreign teachers, etc) so that cultural differences may be recognised and expressed;

- to establish links between the school and the community with the help of the various services and associations working there;

- to study jointly with the teachers and adolescents concerned their relations with employment and training and the role played by cultural characteristics in this connection (made of expression, behaviour, nationality, racist reactions, etc) (1).

In other words, CEFISEM-CEFREM's training staff made the Ministry's aims more explicit and related them to the overall objectives, which may be summarised as follows:

- a campaign against underachievement;
- comprehensive action on the linguistic, social and cultural planes;
- a campaign against racism and ethnocentric cultural attitudes;
- modification of current teaching methods, which, in practice, make intercultural innovation difficult.

2.2 Use of the mother-tongue teacher

The Cassis experiment was geared to these overall objectives and prticular importance was accordingly given to intercultural activities and to the presence of the mother-tongue (and mother-culture) teacher.

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(1) Introductory paper for the Colloquy.Marseilles region pilot project. Ecole Normale d'Instituteurs des Bouches-du-Rhône.

The Portuguese teacher, Mrs Rosa Maria SIMAO, who was already doing extra-curricular work, was involved in the experiment for three years: she was required to do 27 hours of lessons, including 15 hours of intercultural activities for all the school's pupils, 10-1/2 hours of language teaching and 1-1/2 hours of school-community relations. Each class or group of pupils had 3 hours of Portuguese and 2 hours of intercultural activities per week.

For further details about the organisation of the experiment, see Appendices I and II.

CONDUCT OF THE EXPERIMENT

3.0 Basic assumptions

From the theoretical point of view, the experiment is based on a series of assertions concerning the concept of culture: "the way in which a group perceives and expresses its relationship with the world (historical, economic, psychological, linguistic artistic etc) in response to the problems posed by the environment". Hence differences and the need to accept the cultural forms specific to each region, where the cultural history of the individual and the group, including especially traditions, is to be found. Even handed down informally, traditions serve to reassure the individual, who, on that basis, formulates new responses to the new problems which reality constantly poses.

Faced with this dynamic complexity, school tends to hand down a culture that is unified but founded on rigid cultural assumptions which disregard the surrounding reality, or at least exclude from the outset the elements of that reality which do not conform with the basic ideas.

School is therefore perceived as an institution which can form "a closed world unaware of what is happening around it and handing down an image of society that is false because it is static, incomplete (hence biassed),obsolete or idealised, an image in which, in particular, neither foreign children nor other working class children recognise themselves and which, in extreme cases, leads them to reject their social and family environment and the personality of those close to them, to feel guilty about belonging to that environment or to become entrenched in an overall rejection of society" (1).

Consequently, school must not attempt to cast all minds in the mould of the predominant culture, but must accept the cultural differences of the identity and social background of its various pupils; the truth of the matter is that each culture represents an assumption about the interpretation of reality and there are no criteria for determining in any valid way the place each culture should have in the scale of cultures. Hence the important thing is, "by promoting awareness of its inherent values, to assign it a place and not relegate it to the fringe".

The assertion that all cultures are equally valid and, hence, have the right to exist wherever a group represents them, constitutes a first interpretation of the phenomena with which the Cassis intercultural project is concerned.

(1) Introductory paper for the Colloquy.

In this consideration of the distance between school culture and other cultures present, one finds some positive realities and some negative ones, such as:

- underachievement by many pupils from deprived socio-cultural backgrounds;
- underachievement by many pupils from immigrant families when cultures differ from the standard French culture;
- the consequences of this failure as regards access to the world of work (early social relegation, sub-proletarianisation, self-depreciation, aggressive perception of reality etc);
- school's indirect support for discriminatory attitudes of a racist nature based on anachronistic ethnocentric social and cultural attitudes.

School recognising the cultural complexity represented by its pupils, must perform its fundamental task of reducing socio-cultural inequalities by incorporating differences and, in particular, by enabling foreign children to understand one another, understand others and accept their own specific cultural characteristics so as to make a conscious decision about whether they feel and/or wish to be different or not, ie to choose and assume their own identity, as everyone should be able to do.

3.1. Development of the experiment

In accordance with the basic assumptions, the operation had to be a comprehensive one, ie be aimed simultaneously at all the essential components of the culture in contact with school. Three basic fields are involved: the linguistic, the cultural and the social. Action must therefore focus on these three planes, which, by their very nature, represent a meeting-point between the school and out-of-school environments. It was clear from the start that language was of fundamental importance to any innovation that might be made; what was not known was how Portuguese as a foreign language could provide the link with school's other activities. The cultural aspect was to be catered for by certain intercultural teaching units, but this idea was not easy to define and received a muted response from those teachers who interpreted it restrictively.

On the other hand, the social aspect seemed very clear as correspondence with foreign pupils and programmes for co-operation between schools had been standard practice in Cassis for some time. All that remained was to establish direct links with the neighbourhood or with the town's Portuguese community.

Methodologically, the project was therefore taking on the characteristics of "operational research" in which the participants did not merely advance initial hypotheses, but defined them more narrowly and modified them according to their importance and the possibilities of their being realised.

What follows is an analysis of the three components and the role of the persons responsible for implementing in the field the intercultural changes proposed by the CEFISEM-CEFREM group.

3.2. The mother-tongue teacher

The problems related basically to the new role which this teacher was to play within the school. They may be classified as follows:

- organisational problems with regard to timetables;
- identification of the specific role required by the project's objectives and working methods;
- pedagogical problems arising from the inclusion of common intercultural activities in the curriculum.

For CEFISEM-CEFREM, the search for solutions to these problems was a socio-cultural objective in the sense that it involved considerable modification of an institutional model through the incorporation of a variable that was to be put into practice. This meant setting up a series of activities, including:

- meetings between the mother-tongue teacherand all the teachers affected by the project to agree on the kind of co-operation required, on a timetable for the common activities and on joint objectives;

- meetings to explore the initial hypotheses in relation to the new concept of "culture", which represented the starting point for the change of attitude required if intercultural co-operation was to be possible between the teachers.

These meetings did not find solutions to the problems, but made possible the formulation of certain basic assumptions which proved particularly fruitful. The mother-tongue teacher observed the classes' ordinary activities for nearly six months to make herself familiar with the French teachers' methods and techniques. This observation would enable her to draw comparisons with the training she herself had received in Portugal and think critically and constructively about the differences and similarities.

The Portuguese teacher's silent, attentive and receptive presence helped create an atmosphere of acceptance and was, at the same time a form of official representation.

At the end of the first term, all the teachers wanted to have the mother-tongue teacher in their classes to organise joint activities. In accordance with the principles of "operational research", the assumptions formulated by the teachers after the first period of observation and comparison were adopted as being the most valid ones. The mother-tongue teacher began to make regular visits to classes to talk about Portugal, its customs and traditions, its geography and history. It was obvious that this approach reflected a narrow interpretation of the notion of cultures in contact and of the intercultural idea. The teachers very soon realised that such lessons referred to a culture that was remote from the child's actual experience and purely intellectual; furthermore, these lessons emphasised mainly the differences and the folklore aspect, and this led to a misrepresentation of Portuguese culture itself becasue it reduced it to the most familiar stereotypes.

A series of discussion was held to assess the first year of pedagogical "trial and error"; the result was a clearer redefinition of the project's primary objectives and, above all, a clarification of the assumptions underlying the content and methods.

In the second year (1980-81), an organic plan of action incorporating the Portuguese teacher's contribution into an overall curriculum was drawn up after consultation with the leaders of CEFISEM and those in charge of discovery activities at the Aix-en-Provence teacher training college. The Portuguese teacher's contributions were not adjuncts to the French teacher's work, but were dynamically integrated with it. These contributions took the form of teaching units based on three different approaches:

- the inter-grade approach (3rd, 4th and 5th grades),
- the intercultural approach,
- the interdisciplinary approach.

It was thus possible to link certain aspects of Portuguese culture with various activities for which provision was made in the objectives and which were in line with basic concepts found in the curriculum. One of the most important activities carried out during this second stage was on the theme "visit to Portugal", which afforded opportunities to develop a series of mathematical concepts and teach the children to use logical principles of the mathematical type. Not only did the Portuguese teacher's participation in projects of this kind enhance her "status" with the children and parents - thereafter she was regarded as the French teachers' equal - but also her presence brought about a change in the behaviour of the immigrant children, who, feeling reassured, were more forthcoming.

3.3. The linguistic level of the experiment and the mother-tongue teacher

After the first year of integration, the Portuguese teacher, with the agreement of her French colleagues, decided to concentrate on the youngest children, ie those of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades (1).

This was based on the assumption that the durability of results in language and communication is directly related to the age of the children; the younger they are, the better the results. At the same time, it is said that improved linguistic ability in one's mother tongue not only makes for improved communication and expression by improving one's communicative and expressive skills in that language, but also has a positive effect on one's performance in foreign languages owing to the transfer of the attitudes and motivation existing in relation to one's mother tongue.

Consequently, the Portuguese teacher proposed to encourage the children to express themselves and communicate using the language they spoke in the family, even if it was lexically and syntactically poor: this was a way of getting closer to the children's experience and the subjects about which they communicated and, at the same time, a way of improving and developing grammar. The Portuguese classes thus became a linguistic communication workshop where, by agreement with the French

(1) CP (Cours préparatoire), CE1 (Cours élémentaire 1) and CE2 (Cours élémentaire 2).

Teachers, the subjects dealt with were often the same as in the intercultural education classes, so that they could be explored from the conceptual as well as from the linguistic point of view. This showed that the Portuguese language could be used to deal not only with subjects relating to the children's families but also with the knowledge imparted by French education.

At the same time, this had a positive impact on how the portuguese teacher's professional status was perceived within the school; symbolically, from the cultural point of view, this served to substantiate the value of having Portuguese children. but also children belonging to other cultures (eg North African children) as one of the class's positive assets.

This phenomenon was obvious in the cultural activity classes to judge by the increased number of contributions from immigrant children about their culture, from the interest shown by both teachers and pupils in these contributions and from the use of expressions and words in other languages depending on the kind of experience described and its connotations.

3.4 The intercultural level and the mother-tongue teacher

The Portuguese teacher was responsible for two kinds of activities involving entire classes:

- activities to evoke the country of origin through dialogues or the presentation of authentic materials (documents, newspapers, photographs, music etc)

- activities planned with the French teachers as part of the mainstream curriculum and relating to the environment as a major source of intercultural content (home, festivities, work, etc).

After some consideration, this intercultural aspect became the most important to the extent that it had been clarified in the light of the concept of "discovery" activities; these activities are intended to provide children with the means of understanding their environment through the process of knowledge and investigation. The purpose of this is to make them aware of the possibility of organising reality cognitively and, at the same time, to provide them with the concepts that pattern intellectual development, ie spatio-temporel and relational concepts.

As a result of the mother-tongue teacher's presence in the classroom, the status of the foreign cultures present was enhanced, the intercultural diversity of the class could be brought out into the open and the children took an interest in the variety of cultures and felt that they were taking an active part in the experiment. The intercultural approach thus became an ideal way of learning to accept others with as few inhibitions as possible.

3.5. The social level and the mother-tongue teacher

The most interesting aspect of the experiment is undoubtedly the mother-tongue teacher's involvement in the social life of the Portuguese community.

From the start, the teacher profoundly altered her role as a foreign language and culture teacher to become a focal point for the Portuguese families and a link between them and school: she thus became

a social worker and filled a gap left by school: the development of relations between school and the family through an information and communication network based on the families' socio-cultural reality. She therefore began to meet the parents and to act as an intermediary between them and the French teachers. Her presence at meetings gave the parents the courage to speak and it was soon noticeable that the Portuguese group, which usually sat apart in a corner of the room, began to sit down alongside the French parents. The teacher's prestige was such that some families consulted her about problems unrelated to school. A knowledge of French was very important for this. The teacher thus became a focal point: the parents were contacted through her and school circulars were translated into Portuguese to ensure that they would be correctly understood.

The problem of underachievement among Portuguese children was one of the major aspects of this work. The mother-tongue teacher was able to identify some causes of a cultural nature, including:

- Absence sometimes for two months after the Christmas holidays. Indeed, a large number of Portuguese took their paid leave in winter in order to prolong the Christmas festivities with their families; the employers encouraged this practice as they preferred them to work in summer. The teacher made enquiries and, after a long and painstaking process of education and information, succeeded in considerably reducing this very common practice of extended holidays in winter.

- Non-attendance of nursery school. This was clearly related to the fact that nursery school in Portugal falls within the private sector and is more in the nature of welfare assistance than an educational institution. The parents transposed this model to French nursery school and their children were accordingly deprived of the process of socialisation with their peers, a process which facilitates integration in primary school. Here again, an information campaign produced a change in the families' behaviour.

- Absence of Portuguese children from "classes de neige" (classes sent to winter sports centres for lessons and skiing). The Portuguese families rarely sent their children on these trips, claiming that the necessary equipment was too expensive or, quite simply, that such activities were useless. The mother-tongue teacher made enquiries and discovered that this attitude was largely accounted for by socio-linguistic considerations: fear that the Portuguese children might not be able to manage or express their needs in French. This reflected a perception of cultural differences as restricting the individual's life space. The mother-tongue teacher solved the problem by promising to go on these trips, and the result was mass participation by all the children in activities of this kind, which in turn facilitated exchanges between pupils.

At the same time, the mother-tongue teacher remained in permanent contact with the GAPP(1), to report cases which in her opinion required action, to assist the staff of this organisation with Portuguese translation of verbal aptitude tests or instructions for non-verbal tests, and, in the case of children with particular problems, to explain the situation to the parents and to recommend action.

(1) Groupe d'Aide Psychopédagogique (Psychopedagogical Support Group). Works mainly with the first grades of the two primary schools and the nursery school.

3.6 The teachers and intercultural activities

CEFISEM-CEFREM said that the project's objectives also included the working out and implementation of arrangements for regulating the learning and teaching processes and the teacher-training process. To carry out the project themselves the teachers world have to learn to:

- co-operate in formulating educational goals corresponding to their pupils' needs;
- take the socio-cultural circumstances of the school as a starting point;
- play a more active part in the life of the school and the community (parents, cultural associations).

The teachers were receptive to the proposals for innovations in their work and took an active part in the meetings with CEFISEM to organise the experiment. Their contribution was valuable to the organising group and to the Portuguese teacher, and this produced positive results as regards both the school's internal organisation and the teaching.

In particular, they succeeded in working as a team, in reconciling their aims and in working out joint strategies.

The joint discussions on the meaning of "culture" led to the development of teaching units involving people from outside school (parents, craftsmen, organised groups). In this way, a new process of increasing pupils' awareness of the environment was set in motion and higher attendances were recorded at events organised by the Cultural Centre. At the end of each academic year, the school itself organised an exhibition of work done during intercultural activities. In schoolwork proper, it was found that the pupils derived greater benefit from the organisation of learning experiments under their own responsibility. The subjects chosen for intercultural work varied according to the age of the children. They were:

- observation and explanation of cultural events (festivities, traditions);
- analysis of living conditions and of climatic and economic factors in Cassis and elsewhere (visits to various neighbourhoods, to other towns etc);
- study of human behaviour in relation to living conditions, the geography of the regions and technological progress;
- historical approach to the various cultures;
- observation of certain interaactions between the various cultures (music, language, crafts);
- correspondence with pupils in schools in the country of origin.

4. ASSESSMENT OF THE EXPERIMENT

4.0. Portuguese culture and traditions in Cassis

The Cassis experiment is of particular interest because it developed in an apparently quite homogeneous socio-cultural context without any dramatic situations of conflict or social relegation. Nevertheless, analysis of the experiment has revealed, under the calm and pleasant appearance of the place, a series of as yet unsolved cultural problems relating both to the social dimension of the cultures present and to school.

There is much evidence to suggest that the Portuguese community is well-integrated solely from the point of view of folklore and, after two generations, remains closed in on itself. This can be seen in particular in the fact that of the traditions of a remote and idealised Portugal of folk dances and songs and religious festivals. In exhibitions, the emphasis is placed on traditional crafts, brightly coloured costumes, musical instruments and ceramics: this reinforces the image of a Portuguese folk culture that is varied, but economically dormant and remote from the industrial reality of the host country in which the immigrants work. Cultural tradition conceived as nostalgia for the past and for folklore is an element which does not improve the immigrants' prospects for change and social progress and can often become a kind of myth or a way of escape. The problems of the present are often regarded as natural difficulties and receive cultural solutions which turn out to be unsuitable; they are the cause of the many conflicts between parents and children, between local culture and immigrant community, and between school and foreign pupils. We are not against supporting public displays of Portuguese folk culture, but at the same time we do think the Portuguese should help to solve the many porblems of the day by participating in the socio-cultural life of which they are an integral part.

The Cassis experiment highlights the slow pace at which relations between the cultures present are changing. After two generations, the communities' defences are beginning to show a few cracks from which one can observe that which is different; consideration is still being given to the nature and extent of the changes required.

4.1. The objectives of the social integration policy

From the social point of view, the work of the Cassis Cultural Centre and its willingness to support the Portuguese group's proposals succeeded in overcoming the latter's reserved and uninvolved attitude.

The formation of the Santa Maria Ensemble and the organisation of religious festivities in the traditional Portuguese way were certainly of great significance to the population of Cassis and to the immigrants. Through the strength of their songs and music and the depth of their faith, the Portuguese took the first steps towards communication wiht the local community - communication that was not strictly related to a clearly-defined objective. The festivities associated with those events generated spontaneous meetings between immigrant families and the local population. It should be pointed out however, that things did not always run smoothly.

Gaining cultural ground, even at folklore level, is a difficult and slow process. Indeed, while the Cultural Centre was trying to support the group, the Provençal folk group was claiming the right to preserve genuine local traditions and adopted critical and competitive attitudes; at the same time, the group's folklore dimension was becoming more marked, and this alienated the community and caused the group gradually to close in on itself; this in turn led to internal strains which became a test of the leaders' mettle. Only in the past year have relations between the folk groups tended to improve as a result of joint work in other regions.

The danger remains of reducing the Portuguese community's contribution to the level of inert and watered-down folklore.

4.2. The objectives of the Eruopean Commission's intercultural experiment

The intercultural experiment achieved its overall objectives as regards promoting awareness of, and gaining acceptance for, the idea among the most open-minded teachers in the two Cassis schools.

The schools present a varied picture, with some "conventional" teachers and groups of more innovative teachers. The following objectives were definitely attained:

- appreciation of the need to work as a group to prepare teaching activities;
- appreciation of the concept of "discovery" as a cultural encounter with the reality of the environment;
- emphasis on the pupil as the focus of all communication acts in the class;
- opening of school to the community: visits, studies, active participation by parents and persons other than teachers;
- appreciation of the importance of establishing relations with the Portuguese community through the mother-tongue teacher.

It is possible to say, therefore, that the objectives relating to institutional organisation and teaching were partly achieved; on the other hand, it is very difficult to say to what extent the objective relating to underachievement was attained. Generally speaking, the perception of the immigrant child is now closer to the reality: his membership of a foreign cultural group possessing a varied cultural heritage is recognised, but the position of the Portuguese children has not changed a great deal as regards underachievement. The remedial and other special classes preceding entry to the first two classes of primary school are still attended by a very large number of foreign children. The GAPP itself says that the pupils who have the most learning difficulties are migrant children; the reasons for this state of affairs are the language factor and a socio-cultural background which does not facilitate the acquisition of the basic concepts of space, time, quantity and causality.

4.3. Objectives relating to the mother-tongue teacher

The most successful aspect of the experiment is undoubtedly the Portuguese teacher: it may be said that the objectives relating to the modification of her traditional role were fully attained. She confirmed the importance of an institutionalised presence of the foreign culture in the school context by performing an essential function as an intermediary between cultures and between groups of teachers and foreign pupils and their families. Her function was that of a channel of communication receiving input from other channels which otherwise would have been dispersed throught the network. Her ability to communicate with the Portuguese group was a very important factor in making the Portuguese parents aware of educational problems and enabled some old problems to be solved. The fact that both the nursery schools and the parents asked her to step in in the hope that early language work would save the children from attending the special reception classes is indirect proof of the success of her activities. Everyone (teachers and Portuguese and French families) agrees that her role is of primary importance. There are still some organisational problems with regard to general co-operation, but the more outward-looking approach adopted by schools suggests that such problems will be solved.

4.4. Institutional innovations and intercultural innovations

It is interesting to analyse, albeit briefly, the different responses made by school and by the EEC project to the problems of underachievement among immigrant children. School's response has been to increase the number of remedial classes in which pupils with "obvious difficulties" attend courses (1) designed to bring them up to standard.

Hence the assumption is that of backwardness in learning and in cognitive development which can be corrected by intensive remedial teaching. In other words, the problem is confined to the area of school learning and is not related to the causes, which often depend not only - as some think - on socio-economic factors, but also on socio-cultural factors.

The intercultural approach is quite different and is based on the belief that actions should be taken not only through the teaching of certain quite specific things, but also through the process of socio-educational rehabilitation, which, by enhancing the foreign child's knowledge, induces him to learn and to develop his knowledge.

Communication becomes a key factor in the continuous process of acquiring individual knowledge and special importance is therefore attached to educational activities using the different languages in which the children communicate and express themselves.

The existence of these two approaches has prompted teachers to modify the working methods used in remedial classes so as not to turn them into "dumping grounds".

No solution has been found to the problem of reception classes, which are often the cause of the backwardness noticeable in children transferring from nursery to primary school. These reception classes replace the first year of primary school, but have a restricted curriculum. Children who have not made sufficient progress in such classes are required to return to the first class of primary school, from which they had been withdrawn, instead of moving up to the second year.

(1) CRI: Cours de Rattrapage Intégré (Integrated Remedial Classes and CLIN: Classes d'Initiation (Receptive Classes), not for foreign pupils.

As a result of this rigid selection machinery, the situation with regard to underachievement remains unchanged for a large number of foreign pupils; at the age of five, these children have not developed good linguistic ability in French or, for cultural reasons, have developed a cognitive interpretation of reality other than that required by the GAPP's tests.

5. TRANSFERABILITY

5.0. The specific character of the experiment

What is specific about this experiment is, on the one hand, the organisational model developed by CEFISEM-CEFREM to carry out the intercultural experiment and, on the other hand, the mother-tongue teacher's socio-cultural role at school and in relations with the community.

This model is capable of being extended to other experiments, but difficulties often arise with regard to:

- the rigidity of traditional (ethnocentric and intellectual) educational models in a science-and-technology-oriented dominant culture;

- qualitative cultural change in schools and their relations with the community.

Experience shows the slowness of the process of innovation and the need to act cautiously in educating the persons concerned.

Consequently, it is vital to draw up a training programme for both French and foreign teachers to facilitate a rapid assimilation of the cultural realities present in the environment.

5.1. The experiments's future prospects

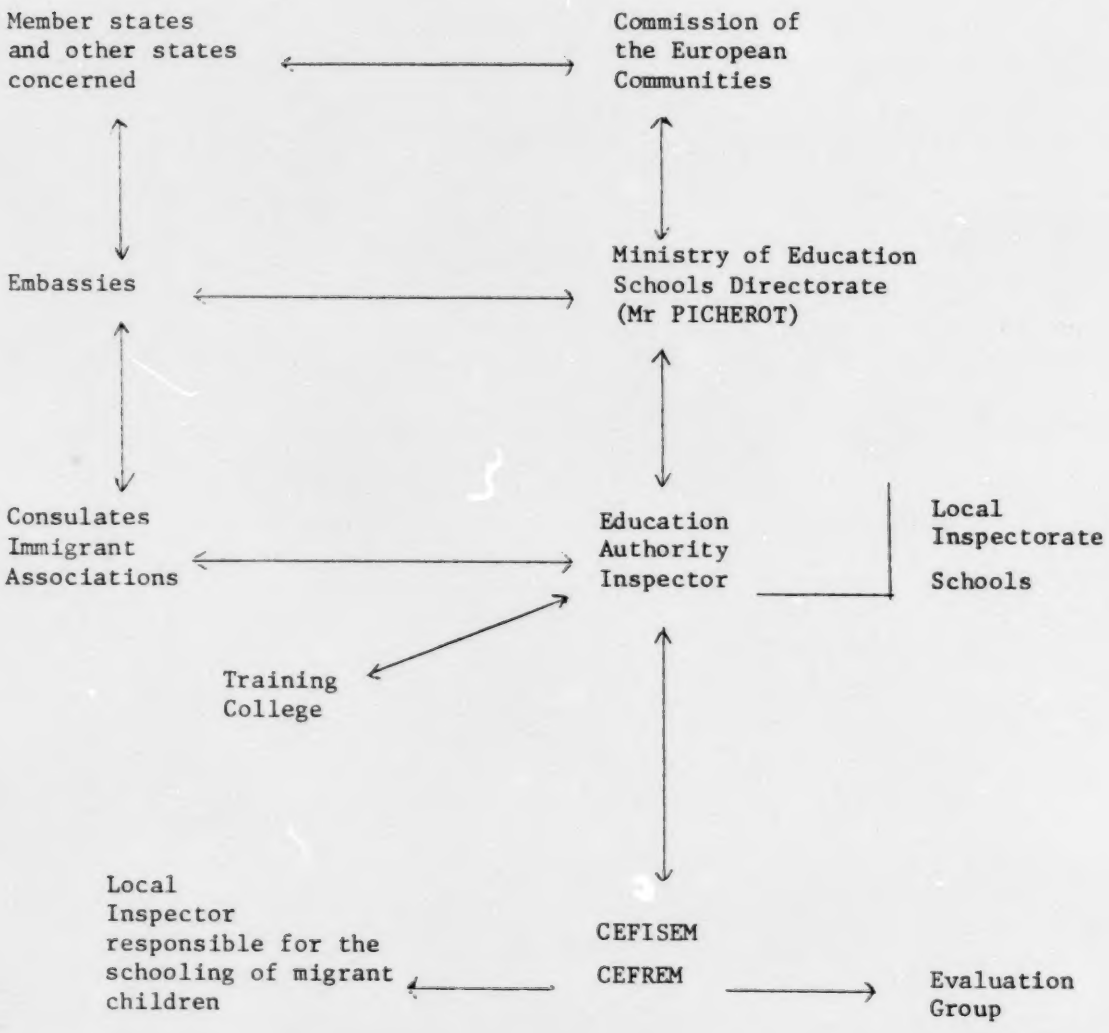
As regards teacher training, we now have the necessary material for making a more thorough investigation of the pedagogical side of the experiment in intercultural teaching and learning and for clarifying those elements which will help to cater to the reality of the environment.

It would therefore be necessary to make a systematic study of the environment and then run a "school-community" course where the teachers would analyse the objective situations that form the context of their pupils' everyday lives.

As regards the mother tongue teacher, the emphasis would have to be placed on her contribution to the school curriculum; furthermore, her early contribution at nursery school should be maintained or even extended.

A P P E N D I X I

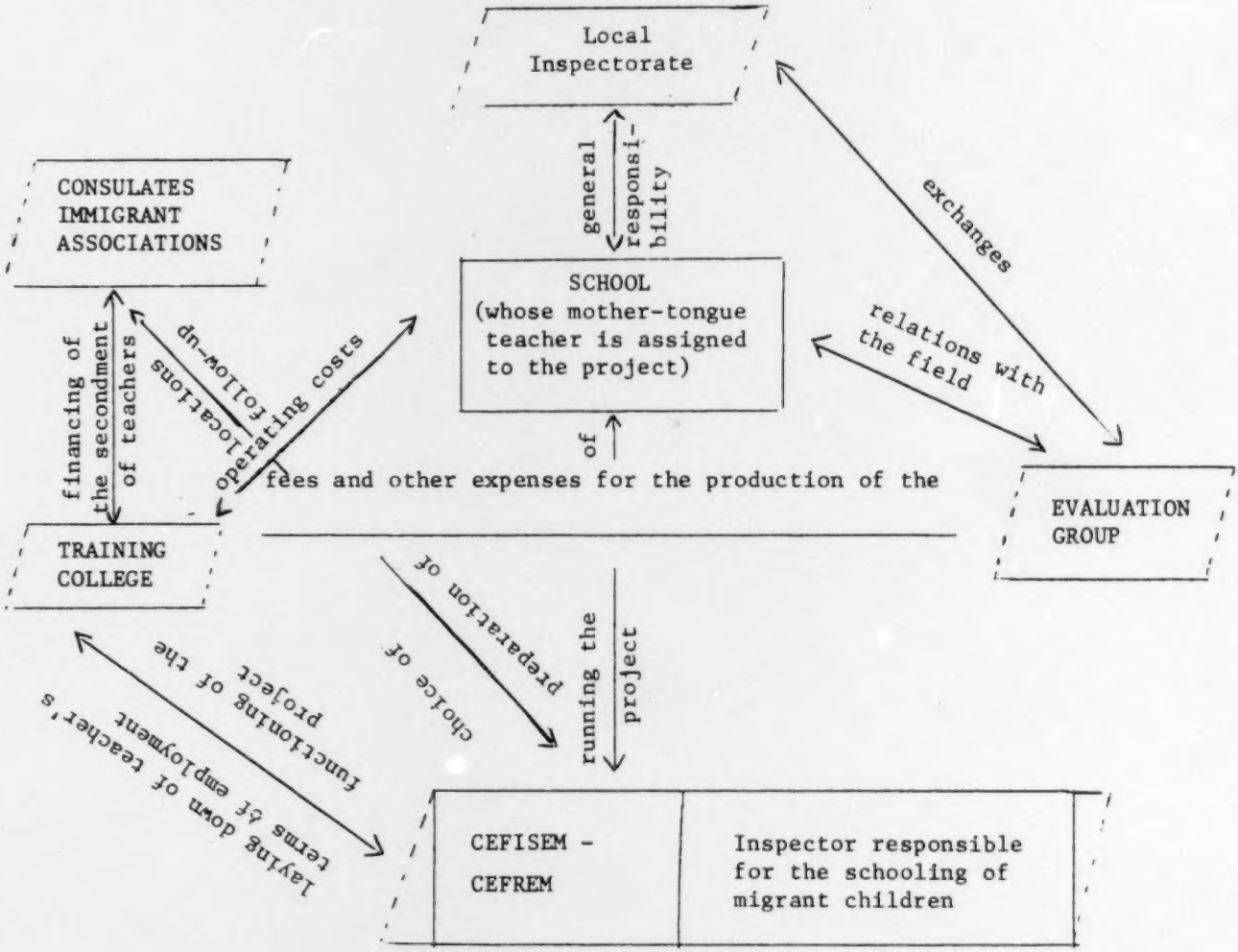
GENERAL ORGANISATION



A P P E N D I X II

Agencies involved in the running of the EEC pilot project

Cassis - Marignane - Marseille - Frais Vallon - Vitrolles



The Education Authority Inspector (Inspecteur d'Académie) in charge of the project sees to it that the various functions are carried out.

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